

RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT RUSHDEN HALL ON TUESDAY 26TH OCTOBER 2021, COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Melanie Coleman, Town Mayor

Councillors:	Sarah Peacock	David Coleman	Richard Lewis
	Phillip Humphrey	Marian Hollomon	David Jenney
	Adrian House	Tracey Smith	Paul Harley
	Gill Mercer	Andy Mercer	Janet Pinnock
	Steven North	Barbara Jenney	Cameron Clarke

Town Clerk Vivienne Prodger

195/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

196/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Cesare Marinaro, Colin Wright, Adrian Winkle, Kaye Rawlins, Carol Childs, Michael Tye and Harriet Pentland.

197/22 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 14th September 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

198/22 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORT

.A remarkably busy and varied time has filled our diaries over the last 6 weeks.

The 17th of September saw the Feast opening and a lovely group of chains and friends joined us at the Station for Fish and Chips. I managed to 'win' 3 cuddly toys..... well, acquired as I think they felt sorry for my lack of fairground skills. On the Saturday I opened the Model Railway weekend at the Station and was given the honour of handing the token over to the driver of the first live train in over 18 months.

*Sunday 19th was really busy, and we managed to fit in the Heritage Day, during which we went on the Bus tour around Rushden and Higham. Our very own Councillor Pinnock gave a brilliant guide to Rushden. We then hot footed it to Raunds for the Mayor's picnic. A most enjoyable day
A breather before visiting Victoria House the following Friday to award special 'Covid Awards' to staff. The staff genuinely care for their clients.*

The next Friday we visited Rushden Primary School to present the Reading challenge. We also saw so many certificates awarded, and it was great to see the smiling faces as they received them. Sadly, due to illness we had to cancel our visit to Daventry.....especially as it was a Gin and Tapas evening. Sunday saw me fully recovered and up at Hall Park early helping to get ready for the Soap Box Derby. Spills and thrills and lots of very competitive entries, this proved to be another of Rushden's regular and well attended.

Tuesday 5th October, we visited the Sea Cadets for the awards evening. It was really inspiring to listen to all the challenges they faced and met during lockdown. I presented many awards including

'The Spirit of Soap Box' my choice of a submarine that was seriously challenged when tackling corners.

A quiz night at Raunds saw the 'Chain Gang' back together, we did not win but we didn't disgrace ourselves.

Sunday 10th was an incredibly special and memorable day for me. Thank you to everyone who supported me at my Civic Service. A special thank you to the officers and staff who ensured it was a 'Covid secure' event. We have received lots of compliments about the day.

A Georgian Walk, on the 13th, around Stamford was fascinating but we had to forgo the afternoon tea in order to travel to Northampton for the Service of Mrs Amanda Lowther, High Sheriff of Northamptonshire.

Another diamond wedding anniversary on the 14th for a local couple.

Saturday 16th saw me dressed in full 40's dress to open the 40's weekend at the station. This was interrupted by a quick visit to my surgery for my flu and Covid booster, before continuing with my visit to the Station. The day was rounded off with a fun 'Snail Race' with our very own Richard Lewis compering the evening..... even with this advantage we didn't win one race.

Ampthill for another Civic Service on the 17th and finally Whittlesey where I wore the recently donated animal print hat.

An interesting, busy and fun time representing our town. It has been wonderful getting out with the Chain Gang and chatting, everyone voicing the same views 'life goes on', safely and carefully BUT we must get on with life.

199/22 POLICING ISSUES

To receive the minutes of the last JAG Meeting as follows:-

1. Introductions

The Chairman welcomed all and everyone in room introduced themselves.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from, Cllr Angela Gardener (Higham Ferrers Town Council), Sandra Mitcham (Higham Ferrers Town Clerk), Mike Greenway (NNC), Louise Morfitt (NNC).

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of the JAG meeting held on 13th May 2021 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. Update on Agreed Priorities

Sgt Leigh Goodwin advised the JAG members of the following activity

New staffing levels:

- 1 x PC and PCSO for Irthlingborough now.
- 1 x PC and PCSO - PC to arrive soon post tutoring.
- 3 x PC and 4 x PC for Rushden

Warrants – Mis-use of Drugs act in Higham Ferrers - looking at Anti-Social Behaviour legislation to surround this.

2 x arrested and investigation ongoing for Possession with intent to supply in Irthlingborough - substantial amount of drugs on person, cash and offensive weapons.

Warrant - Palace Court, Rushden – Possession with intent to supply investigation ongoing. Applied for closure order but tenancy given up on day of court hearing. Same male recently arrested for further PWITS offences.

Warrant - Risdene Court - subsequent closure order at 19. Further closure order at 29. Further work ongoing in Risdene Court.

The police survey was completed by 527 people within East Northamptonshire and the results were as follows - 49.2% for road safety and 32.5% for drug dealing.

A drug detection dog had been funded by Rushden Town Council and this had brought some good results in terms of finding and seizing drugs at various locations within Rushden.

Irthlingborough had been offered a lot of re-assurance in wake of the tragic teenage fatal stabbing in Wellingborough. This incident had connections with Irthlingborough and the police did spend considerable time working with residents and offering support.

There had still be concerns about anti-social behaviour and drug dealing in the alleyway at Alfred Street Rushden. One of the new PCSO's has been assigned to this problem and will be working closely with residents to try and resolve these problems.

Vivienne Prodger, Rushden Town Council advised that PCSO's had been using Rushden Hall as a mobile office over the past few weeks. This seemed to be working well and enabled the Town Council and Officers to share information regularly.

5. Priorities for next 3 months

Top Priorities next quarter following the East Northants survey:-

Road Safety & Road Traffic Offences Drug Dealing & Drug Misuse

Moving forward - team effort working together. Situational and environmental awareness to reduce issues. Funding for VAS signs via OFPCC. Cutting down hedgerows etc, improve lighting etc. Streetwatch/NHW schemes.

Everyone to provide an update at the JAG as to what they have done toward the LIP's.

JAG meeting to specifically be around the LIP's – Any other business needs to be brought to police attention outside of the meeting via PLR or email to the team inbox/direct to local officer.

6. Other Policing Issues

Bert Jackson queried whether anything could be done regarding noisy vehicles. He asked whether drivers could face prosecution for having a vehicle that omitted noise above a certain decibel level. Sgt Goodwin explained that if the vehicle had a valid MOT certificate it was very difficult to charge anyone with an offence.

7. Highways Issues

Alfred Street, Rushden – following the problems that had been experienced here, Paul Wilcox RTC requested that Sarah Barnwell, Balfour Beatty look at the possibility of installing a CCTV camera on one of the lampposts. Sarah agreed to look into this matter.

The problem of lorries manoeuvring parked cars when trying to deliver to Home Bargains, Rushden was discussed. It was suggested that yellow lines be introduced to restrict on road parking – Sarah Barnwell to look into this to see if it is feasible.

Jon Gray, ITC commented on the ongoing water leak in Irthlingborough High Street, which he felt had now become a permanent ‘water feature’ as it had been present for such a long time! SB to investigate this.

8. VOI Scooters

Paul Wilcox reported the method for eliminating the scooters from certain areas did not appear to be working, as RTC had requested the scooters be excluded from Hall Park and they were now being ridden in the park on a daily basis. RTC had reported this to VOI on a number of occasions.

Both Rushden and Higham Ferrers Town Councils reported that the scooters are still being misused. People under the age of 18 are using the scooters, riding with two on a scooter and riding on the footpaths instead of using the highway. Sgt Goodwin said they are aware of this and all mis--use needed to be reported to Voi. She also added that the trial period for the scooters has now been extended into 2022.

9. Any other business

Sgt Goodwin informed everyone that the new Electoral Boundaries will have an impact on how the JAG groups are considered. It is possible that Raunds may be included within this JAG instead of with Thrapston when the boundaries are confirmed. Members felt this was disappointing as the dynamics of this JAG group now worked really well.

Christine MacKenzie gave a report on the work of the Neighbourhood Watch. RTC invited them to their next Community Services meeting to allow them to report to members the invaluable work they carry out.

10. Time and date of next meeting

It was agreed the next meeting would be held at Higham Ferrers Town Council on 28th October 2021 at 10.30am.

There were no other policing issues raised at the meeting.

200/22 LEADERS ADDRESS

Good evening.

I do feel that slowly things are moving in the right direction. Groups are meeting for face-to-face meetings though still taking the precautions of face masks etc. and the booster vaccines are now available along with the flu ones.

Since the last Full Council meeting the Council has started to get out there amongst the community to show we are still here. The Heritage Weekend at the Lakes, though slightly damp I understand, was well received and I thank all those who took part.

Work is progressing with our new consultants Troy Planners and a meeting was held for members to discuss the proposals of the way forward. That will be an agenda item later.

Richard and I met up with a good selection of town and parish councillors at the beginning of October for the NCALC AGM. Held at Angel Square in Northampton. It was good to chat over a coffee and the ever-welcome bacon butties. Again, Richard will report on the meeting later.

The Soap Box Derby was another tick in the box and well received with a few thrills and spills. The prize giving is always great to see. I am not sure who are more competitive the children or the adults. Again, a big thank you to all those who helped on the day and to the sponsors King Tools, AJ Cycles and Santa Pod.

I have attended a meeting as the town's representative for the Queens Green Canopy. This involves all Town and Parish Councils within Northamptonshire. It is being led by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant Paul Parsons. The idea is to register all the trees planted over the next 12 months between Oct -March 21/22 and Oct- March 22/23. Grants available via various organisations. NNC will be working with the schools and planting trees on land that they own as a council too. RTC is already ahead of the game, as many who attended the meeting this was the first, they had heard of the project. At the next Community meeting we hope to start and identify specific areas in our wards and once the planning process is completed on our applications, we also hope to add many more trees to those sites. I have spoken to the Allotments Society who are also keen to be part of the project and the Rotary Club and other organisations have also approached RTC to plant trees. There is a specific logo we must use if plaques are to be used and we are looking at trying to get the cost of those down a little as they are quite expensive.

If anybody has 70 acres of land free, and they would also like to create a wood. Please let me know as that is one of the special projects they would like to do.

Our first tree will be planted on Friday in the Hall Park in memory of Cllr Ron Pinnock. A fitting way to start this amazing project throughout the country.

The Hall Park once again received its Green Flag during lockdown. This was a great achievement and we have now been able to publicly acknowledge that achievement. Well, done to all those involved in the ground maintenance of our open spaces. I think over the past year we have all appreciated their hard work and the effect these spaces have upon our wellbeing when times are hard. We will continue to improve these areas with Jubilee Park next on our list.

The Remembrance Parade will be different this year as due to issues with the British Legion being unable to insure the event. The Town Council have agreed to take it over. However, due to time constraints and Covid it will be without its march. That said the service will be the same at the War Memorial and normal service will be resumed for next year. The mayor will walk from the Hall with the invited guests and the standard bearers. The Parade is something we are very proud of and is appreciated by all ages within the town.

Finally, we will be looking at setting up a Youth Council. Full details will be discussed at the next Community meeting and the terms of reference will be established. This is an area we have not

covered for some years now, but we are open to new ideas to see if there is any appetite for such a group.

Thank you all for your continued support on everything we do. Dare I say the words “ Christmas” Light switch on is our next big town event!!

201/22 UNITARY COUNCIL

Councillors Andy Mercer, Barbara Jenney, Gill Mercer, David Jenney and Steven North reported on various aspects of work they are involved with at North Northants Unitary Council.

The following report was also received from Councillors Jennie Bone, Harriet Pentland and Bert Jackson:-

Since our last report to the Town Council, we have continued to meet regularly to discuss and look for resolutions to matters brought to our attention, including a meeting of the three of us last Friday. At the end of September, we met with the Crown Estates at Rushden Lakes and were interested to find out more about the ‘beach huts’ which are available for businesses in the Town to showcase their work and encourage people into Rushden.

We have also had a further full council meeting in Corby, which is to be the base for full council meetings going forward. At this meeting, there was lively debate around constitutional amendments and the start time of full council meetings.

Following the slow progress on the repairs to Chichele College, which is causing disruption to local residents and events in Higham, we have asked for a meeting with English Heritage to discuss this further and hope to have this in the diary very soon.

As ever, we have continued to attend training sessions on important areas of the Council’s work, including relating to Northamptonshire Highways this month. There have also been, alongside corresponding with residents and other parties, a number of committee meetings which will be highlighted in our mini individual reports below:

Councillor Bone:

As part of another busy month, I have attended further meetings of the Climate Change, Growth and Environment Panel and the Thrapston Area Planning Committee. I have also attended a briefing on waste services at NNC and further training relating to the committee I chair. In addition, I have assisted residents with issues such as missed bin collections and had a 2 hour walk around Riverside Park with former Councillor, Richard Gell, which was very interesting.

Councillor Jackson:

Alongside attending a number of committee meetings that I am on, I have been working with interest on the plans for improvements to the Co-op bus-stop. I hope that a suitable upgrade will come to the fore very soon. I have also been keeping a keen eye on the repairs to the wall along Saffron Road, which appear to have stalled; I hope that the meeting we are seeking will be of use.

Councillor Pentland:

This month, I was pleased to meet with volunteers from the Greenway who work hard to keep it clear of as much litter as possible. As a regular user of the Greenway, it was nice to be able to thank them for all they do.

Having raised the concerns, alongside the Town Council and Councillor Barbara Jenney, it was good to hear that the road markings along the High Street in Rushden were to be repainted, which I hope will address the issues facing local businesses. More broadly, I have continued to work hard on NNC’s green agenda, including meetings about cycling and walking infrastructure, bus services and much, much more.

Looking to other news from NNC:

- Have your say on North Northants parks and leisure:

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/have-your-say-north-northants-parks-and-leisure>

- Gritting ready to respond: <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/gritting-ready-respond>

- Funding to help boost High Streets in North Northants:

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/funding-help-boost-high-streets-north-northants>

- Visit the East Northants area Health and Well-being Festival 2021 this half-term:

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/visit-east-northants-area-health-and-wellbeing-festival-2021-half-term>

- North Northamptonshire Council to pay Real Living Wage:

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/north-northamptonshire-council-pay-real-living-wage>

As you can see, a lot of work has been going on and if we covered everything we have been doing, we'd be here all night but should you have any queries please do not hesitate to get in touch!

202/22 CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Community Services Committee 21st September 2021

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on 21st September 2021

Policy & Resources Committee 12th October 2021

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on the 12th October 2021

Planning Consultative Committee 19th October 2021

The Chairman gave a verbal report on the agenda items from the meeting held on 19th October 2021

203/22 NNC STRATEGIC TOWN AND PARISH FORUM

Councillors Sarah Peacock and Richard Lewis had attended the North Northamptonshire Strategic Town and Parish Forum via Zoom. This forum was called to explain the strategic plans for the Unitary Towns and Parishes and give some insight into how the Council will move forward with their vision for Towns within the district.

Many attendees at the meeting had concerns about equalisation within North Northamptonshire and how the newly formed Town Councils are still being heavily supported by the Unitary, despite now having their own Precepts.

This matter is to be discussed later on this agenda.

204/22 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members discussed recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of the 12th October 2021 regarding;

- a) Clerk's office
- b) Remembrance March
- c) Silverdale Grove

RESOLVED

- a) The Town Clerk to move to downstairs offices previously occupied by TDS. Town Clerk's existing office to be marketed for rental.

- b) Rushden Town Council are happy to take on the responsibility of organising the Remembrance March, subject to gaining adequate insurance cover.
- c) The two pieces of land at Silverdale Grove to be marketed for residential use with a footpath right of way and small area of open space to be retained on both sites.

205/22 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Community Services Committee 8th June 2021

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 8th June 2021 be received and adopted.

Policy and Resources Committee 31st August 2021

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held of the 31st August 2021 be received and adopted.

Planning Consultative Committee 7th September 2021

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee held on 7th September 2021 be received and adopted.

Planning Consultative Committee 28th September 2021

RESOLVED

That the report of the meeting of the Planning Consultative Committee held on 28th September 2021 be received and adopted.